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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ABU DHABI 002285

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STATE FOR NEA/IR AND NEA/ARP

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/04/2016

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PARM](#) [IR](#) [AE](#)

SUBJECT: FM SHEIKH ABDULLAH, PM SHEIKH MOHAMMED ON IRAN  
NUCLEAR PROGRAM

REF: A. ABU DHABI 1903

[1](#)B. ABU DHABI 2277

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Classified By: AMBASSADOR MICHELE J. SISON, REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: UAE Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed (AbZ) chaired the GCC Foreign Ministers meeting in Riyadh June 3 where the main point of deliberation was Iran's nuclear program. Both AbZ and UAE VP/PM Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid (MbR) made public statements in recent days expressing concern over Iran nuclear radiation leaks and calling for a WMD-free Middle East. According to AbZ, Oman is hesitant to go to Tehran on behalf of the GCC without clear "talking points." End summary.

[1](#)2. (C) The June 3 GCC Foreign Ministers meeting included a two and one half hour meeting on Iran and "one minute on Yemen," AbZ told Ambassador on June 4. "It was a tough meeting." The foreign ministers did not agree on an approach toward Iran, but will meet again on June 10 in Riyadh, still with AbZ as chair. AbZ added that the Omanis are "hesitant to go to Tehran" on behalf of the GCC states to deliver a message expressing concern about Iran's nuclear program. At the GCC Foreign Ministers meeting in Riyadh June 3, the Omanis, according to AbZ, told fellow council members, "If you want us to go, we need talking points."

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Sheikh Abdullah on Fears of Iran Nuclear Program  
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[1](#)3. (U) At a June 3 press conference following the GCC foreign ministers meeting, AbZ asserted that "the GCC would support all efforts to hold talks between the international community and Iran to solve the stalemate through diplomatic means." Elaborating on Gulf states' fears about Iran's nuclear program, AbZ said, "Honestly speaking, we, as people of the region, are afraid of the nuclear program. There is fear that it could pose a danger to the region and its environment as well." AbZ noted that Gulf states depend heavily on the Gulf waters "for desalinated water as well as for electricity. (The Gulf) is also used as a passage for carrying energy resources to various parts of the world. Hence, any radioactive leak from an Iranian nuclear power plant could cause an enormous ecological catastrophe by polluting the Gulf waters."

[1](#)4. (U) Speaking at the opening of the GCC Foreign Ministers' meeting June 3, AbZ repeated his comments that GCC states are "extremely alarmed" by developments in Iran's nuclear

program, and discussed the "considerable fear" over the potential for a radioactive leak at an Iranian nuclear power plant causing an ecological catastrophe in the Gulf. He called on Iran to cooperate fully with the International Atomic Energy Agency and to come forward with more substantive guarantees. AbZ reiterated the need for a diplomatic solution (ref A) while advocating that the Gulf and the broader Middle East be free of Weapons of Mass Destruction. AbZ's statements were reported by the official Emirates News Agency (WAM) and widely in both Arabic and English language press.

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Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Call for WMD-Free Middle East  
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15. (U) Also on June 3, London-based al-Sharq al-Awsat reported UAE Vice President and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Rashid al-Maktoum (MbR) making almost identical statements in a personal interview. Calling for the "clearing out" of Weapons of Mass Destruction from the Middle East, MbR stated that the issue must be addressed peacefully through negotiations with "international legitimacy." He expressed concern over Iran's nuclear program, "Any radioactive leakage will affect the entire region," evoking the image of a Chernobyl-type disaster in the Gulf.

16. (C) Comment: Senior UAEG officials appear to be coordinating their messages on Iran. The UAEG, although clearly worried about Iran's nuclear program, is careful to portray its consternation, publicly at least, in environmental and ecological terms rather than as military and defense concerns. Seeking not to escalate what it views as a potentially dangerous confrontation, the UAEG may be looking for a compromise whereby Iran would continue to pursue a non-weapons related nuclear program, but within the confines of cooperation with the IAEA. End comment.

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